

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

December 2, 2015
Minutes

PRESENT: John DeBenedetti; Tom Bock; William Lindsay; Heather Chase; Arne Jonynas;
David Pisha

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Shawn Cunningham; Edward Huse; Cil Mathews; Donna Allen; Dan
Cook; Tom Hildreth; Matt McCarthy

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman DeBenedetti.

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

November 24, 2015:

The minutes are not ready as the recording is not available from SAPA. They will be on the next agenda.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Tom Hildreth stated that he would like to speak about Chester's history. He stated that there is a disagreement regarding the birth year of Chester – 1761 or 1766. The Historical Society is of the opinion that 1766 is the official birth year. Tom Hildreth stated that there were settlers in 1761 who applied for a grant for New Flamstead. The grant failed for reasons unknown. The grant was finally received in 1766 announcing the Town of Chester.

Tom Hildreth stated that Peter Farrar performed extensive research proving that 1766 is the official birth year of the Town of Chester. Therefore, 2016 is Chester's 250th anniversary. Tom Hildreth stated his opinion that the town needs to create a celebration for the community in 2016. At a previous meeting, there were 3 board members who indicated their opinion that they did not want to fund a 250th anniversary. Tom Hildreth requested that the Town of Chester signs be corrected to read 1766.

John DeBenedetti stated that this is a big event. He stated that as a citizen he is in favor of a celebration. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of a simple celebration representing life in 1766. Tom Hildreth stated that when the Historical Society meets in January at their first meeting, he is hopeful that the celebration would be part of their discussion. David Pisha noted that if money needs to be put into the budget that decision should be made very soon. Discussion ensued. The Board agreed to carry this item as an agenda item for the next few meetings in hopes that will people will come out and be willing to participate.

Tom Hildreth also noted that the town needs to settle the issue of date and make an official declaration of its opinion.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that Julie Hance will be speaking with Richard Amore tomorrow regarding the grant for the master plan.

Brookside Cemetery project: Arne questioned the status of the cemetery project. David Pisha noted that Deb Daniels is working on the survey. Jeff Sheldon is working on gathering pricing information for lots for the new cemetery. David Pisha also stated that Deb Daniels will be incorporating the bridge design and location in the final design for the cemetery.

O'Neil land purchase: Heather Chase questioned the status of the title search on the O'Neil land. Julie Hance stated that the title searcher is coming tomorrow to perform the search. The closing date has been set for December 30.

4. 2016 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET:

John DeBenedetti questioned the status of paying for the extra paving on Depot Street. David Pisha stated that he and Cil have reviewed the outstanding expenses and the outstanding revenue and have come up with an estimate of \$50,000.00 for a surplus.

John DeBenedetti stated that the Selectboard expenses are up \$2,000.00. The agreement was to leave the number at \$7,500.00 at this time. However, if the budget shows a tax increase, they will hold at \$5,500.00.

John DeBenedetti stated that the Selectboard needs to determine the amount of maximum percentage of increase for salaries. David Pisha noted that the budget sets back a 3% increase but that is not a guarantee of a 3% raise. Arne Jonynas stated that if the budget needs to be cut, he is not in favor of cutting salaries.

John DeBenedetti wanted to confirm that the outside auditors' expense is going to remain at \$13,000.00. He also stated that there is a legal line and an enforcement line in zoning. The Selectboard agreed to increase the enforcement line by \$2,500.00.

It was noted that the dispatching line needs to be increased to \$21,000.00. It was also noted that the \$10,000.00 to Hartford has not been paid yet. The Selectboard discussed the outstanding revenues to be expected within Public Works.

Dan Cook, Ambulance Coordinator, was present to discuss his budget. He stated that he is in need to hiring Golden Cross to cover during daytime hours. Golden Cross has quoted \$1,200.00 per month to cover Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. Dan Cook stated the volunteer count during the weekday is down. David Pisha stated that \$12,750.00 would need to be added to the budget as a separate line item for Golden Cross. Discussion ensued regarding the methods of contracting with Golden Cross. Dan Cook stated that he is actively recruiting. He is having

trouble finding people. Dan Cook suggested that in the near future, the town may want to look at a full time ambulance person. The salary would be approximately \$30,000.00 per year. Discussion also ensued regarding regional ambulance service which appears to be coming in the future. The Selectboard encouraged Dan Cook to speak with David Pisha regarding potential personnel adjustments.

Matt McCarthy was present to discuss the budget for the recreation department. John DeBenedetti questioned the summer program. Matt McCarthy stated that the school has taken over the summer program. Funds were budgeted last year, but were not expended. Expenses are up slightly and revenues are down slightly. John DeBenedetti discussed the three capital expenses for 2016; the pool decking, surfacing the basketball court, and the fencing at Cobleigh Field. Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the pool and what is happening. Matt McCarthy stated that RenoSys received the bid for the pool liner which will be completed in the spring of 2016. The money for the pool decking would help to finish that project.

Matt McCarthy stated that the Winter Carnival is scheduled for February 12, 13 and 14. He stated that things came together great for the event. Matt McCarthy stated that the dog sleds will not be here this year. However, Peter Hudkins will be doing sleigh rides. Friday night there will be a dinner at Chester Andover for the kids. Everything else remains the same.

David Pisha reviewed the Capital Plan changes with the Selectboard. The changes were a gradual increase in the revenue into the plan; the addition of funds into the facility line; the paving bond will begin principal repayment in 2018; as well as the addition of an erosion control line. David Pisha stated that having some cash remaining in the Capital Plan creates a contingency plan. The expenditure of these contingency funds would require voter approval which will help to limit spending. John DeBenedetti noted that the excavator is scheduled in both the capital plan as well as the series one bond. He further noted that there is no money being allocated in 2016 for paving in the general fund. His concern is relative to a large increase that will show in 2017. David Pisha offered solutions and stated that he will review this. Heather Chase questioned the library repayment. Julie Hance stated that the library is a partial loan which can be paid in less than 5 years. Arne Jonynas questioned the sidewalk line and if money should be set aside. David Pisha stated that he would prefer to carry this in the paving line as the only time that sidewalk work can be done is when a grant is received. Discussion ensued regarding the fire department equipment and the possibility of regionalizing in the future. William Lindsay requested that the breakdown of interest and principal be broken out. Discussion ensued regarding how the Popple Dungeon revenue will affect the overall budget.

William Lindsay stated that there is no increase in payroll in the cemetery department. David Pisha stated that he was waiting to see how the year end expenses would end up since they are behind in expenses at this time.

5. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

The Selectboard agreed that the General Fund Budget and the 250th Celebration should be items on the next agenda.

6. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Tom Bock to adjourn. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Heather Chase
Clerk of the Select Board

The SAPA-TV recording of this meeting is hereby made a part of the permanent minute record of this meeting.